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## 'THE PARTY.'

WHEREVER there is what business language calls 'a good thing,' you may be tolerably certain there is 'a party.' The function and vocation of 'the party' is to advance a little needful money to carry on the concern, receiving the great bulk of the profits in return. Be it some little shop speculation, some new mode of supplying an old want of the public, a successful periodical work, a clever and widely serviceable invention, or whatever else, the originator falls naturally into the hands of 'a party'—so naturally, or as a matter of course, that he would probably feel his position to be somewhat eccentric were it otherwise. When we see, then, any apparently good thing, or any man to all appearance conducting a large and lucrative concern, it would be rash to take it all as it seems. We need to know the secret arrangement with 'the party' before speculating on the subject. It is like looking over the landlords of an Irish county, where we see only the nominal owners, living or not living on the acres, while the real proprietors are the owners of mortgages—men who derive all the sweets of property, without any duty to perform or state to keep up.

It is the part of any honest blundering fellow to keep a shop from morning to night, to tax his brain in writing, in order to keep up some literary undertaking, or to excooperate and realise some adroit piece of mechanism, or some useful chemical compound: it is easy to be the ostensible, toiling, meritorious man in all these cases. But to be 'a party,' sitting calmly in the rear, making a small sum of money, judiciously applied, serve the purpose usually supposed to be served by talent and diligence—thus to pocket proceeds with little risk, no responsibility, no work—that requires a truly clever person. The nominal man is like a hand; 'the party' is as the head. The former is human and workman-like; the latter is a master and a kind of deity. No one knows what it is to be 'a party' till he has become one himself, or fallen into the hands of one. 'The party' sees his fellow-creatures flocking around him, begging to be saddled, bridled, and ridden by him. He feels like the Evil One buying up human souls. In the English commercial world, it is scarcely worth while to be anything but 'a party.' In literature, to be an author of name is to be a slave: be 'a party,' even if it be only the stationer who supplies the paper, and you are in comparison as one who sits on Olympus, and shakes the spheres.

Many years ago, a demand arose among the ladies for a particular kind of lace-work, applicable to various articles of dress, and which could be almost entirely manufactured by machinery. The machines required

were expensive, and as only a single pattern could be executed on one, the variety in the descriptions of goods produced did not for a long time at all keep pace with the continued and increasing demand. It happened, owing to the illness of the maker of the original machines, which were always kept closed against the prying eyes of visitors, that a young Lancashire machinist was called in to repair one which had suffered fracture. The young man studied its structure well, made drawings of the various parts, and in the leisure of his evenings at home pondered over them, with a view, if possible, of effecting some valuable improvement. After a twelvemonth's thinking and experimenting, and the laborious construction of a working-model, he hit upon a new plan, by which it was practicable to work any number of patterns by a single machine, and that, too, one of a much less complex description, and therefore less liable to need repairs than any then in use. Had he been wise, as he was ingenious, he would have held his peace, and taken measures to secure for himself the advantage of his invention. But the thing got wind, and came to the ears of 'a party,' who flew to the inventor, bought up the entire property in the new machine at a cost of less than £100, got it rapidly constructed and into work, and has pocketed from that time to this—a period extending over a quarter of a century—an income sometimes amounting to tens of thousands annually, arising solely from that single bargain. The inventor continued a working-machinist to the last day of his life, and died lately, leaving his family to maintain themselves by their own labour.

At the late grand show in Hyde Park, were a multitude of ingenious contrivances by men of no previous reputation and of little or no capital. Many of these, which were more clever than useful, died a natural death; and many more, through the attention they there excited, have been brought into use, and have added to the perfection of our means of manufacture, or to the efficiency of our domestic implements or arrangements for home comfort. But if the question could be answered—who has reaped the profit arising from their dissemination? we are persuaded that, in the majority of instances, that smart business practitioner, 'the party,' would be found to have swallowed the lion's share. Among many examples, is that of a maker of musical instruments, in a small way of business, who by a simple mechanical application, so much improved the power of an instrument in common use, as to effect in those which he produced a very marked superiority over those of rival makers. He was with reason sanguine as to the ultimate results of his invention—but wanting the means of making it

generally known, he unavoidably fell into the hands of 'a party,' who offered to advance the necessary capital under certain conditions. The conditions were—that the inventor should bind himself, under a ruinous penalty, to surrender every instrument he should make for the next seven years to his patron at a specified price above the cost of material, and should pledge himself to make not less than a certain number per month. This bargain was agreed to, and signed and sealed under legal direction. The result is, that the inventive genius, from being a small manufacturer, has become a large one, inasmuch as he now makes twenty instruments where he formerly made two—but he declares, and we believe truly, that he has not a penny more to spend upon himself, owing to the extremely minute fraction of profit which comes to his share—while he has the anxiety and responsibility of a large establishment to add to his former grievances. Meanwhile, 'the party' derives a profit of from forty to sixty per cent. upon every instrument produced, and will continue to do so for five years longer, by the end of which time he will have amassed, at the present rate of demand, a net gain little short of £17,000. We might parallel this case of the musical instrument-maker by a tale of a printer of paper-hangings, whom another 'party' beguiled into a similar predicament—and again by that of a gunmaker, who was no better off until he put an end to a contract of the same kind by slipping into his coffin.

In cultivating what he calls 'the legitimate use of capital,' the 'party' has no exclusive tastes. Give him only a concern involving small outlay, little risk, and no trouble, and he is ready to go into it. We have to imagine him in all possible spheres. Say he has fallen in with an improvident artist of rising talent, he engages all his pictures for the next seven years, and perhaps makes the modest gain of 500 per cent. by the speculation. We must view him even entering into the sacred walks of science. Several years ago, a scientific man of high character and attainments, in the course of his experiments in relation to the subtlest and strangest of all natural agencies, had fallen upon the germ of a new discovery, which was destined to operate a mighty change, to the advantage of society in all its phases, whether political, commercial, or domestic. In partial ignorance of the grand results to ensue from his discovery, and in total ignorance of the natural history of 'the party,' he admitted a specimen of that genus into his confidence, and intrusted him with the practical demonstrations of the mechanism before the public. 'The party' soon felt the importance and value of his position; and, as usual, came to consider the inventor as a mere subordinate. When, by and by, it was proposed to form a joint-stock company for the purpose of working out the discovery, 'the party' conducted the negotiation, and having obtained the offer of upwards of a hundred thousand pounds, proceeded to arrange with the inventor, that he should accept about a fifth of that sum, and then put the remaining four-fifths in his own pocket. This was perhaps—take it for all in all—the most brilliant stroke of work ever performed by any 'party.'

Gentle reader, where you see a very fine shop with an appearance of good custom, do not hasten to think that the owner is a prosperous man—wait to learn whether he has 'a party' sitting like a buttery spirit in the back-room, eating up the profit. Where you see a clever active publisher bringing out great numbers of capital books, and making himself no inconsiderable fame, don't rashly conclude that he must be making a fortune. Perhaps 'a party,' in the form of a wholesale stationer, who supplies all his paper at not more than fifteen per cent. above market prices, saves him from all the cares of increasing wealth. If you find the world going distracted about a particular writer, and buying his books in scores of thousands, don't think, if

you are yourself a poor author, that he, as a rich one, may be able to lend you fifty pounds till your history of the Lower Empire comes out. Perhaps his publisher acts towards him as 'a party,' and cannot, though he wished it, be very merciful, seeing that he is in the hands of 'a party' in his turn. In short, wherever there is an appearance of thriving, suspect there may be 'a party,' and you will seldom be wrong; for the fact is, where the spoil is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

The legislature of this country is very rigorous in imposing restrictions upon a set of poor tradesmen calling themselves pawnbrokers, from an idea that it is necessary to protect the public against their practices. With 'parties,' who are to pawnbrokers what tigers are to ferrets, it takes no such trouble. Happy fraternity! unseen, unknown, irresponsible, a continual feast of the kind which Sancho liked—namely, behind backs—is yours.

You have nothing to do but to fix a spigot in a neighbour's heart, and sit enjoying the crimson stream. How intense must be your sense of triumph over the poor fools who take front places in the world, where there is nothing but responsibility, hard work, and the mockery of a little honour! How you must hug yourselves on the sagacity which is contented to sit in a back-seat, and suck unnoted! How supreme must be your contempt for work and duty!

#### MR SIMON'S REPORT—NATURE OF THE CHOLERA POISON.

SANITARY agitation has opened up a new field for the influence and exertions of members of the medical profession. It was long a subject of remark, and, indeed, a natural consequence of the ordinary position of the ministers of health, that they appeared to be cut off from the life of citizenship—the political side of man's existence—which was so prized as the exclusive province of the free man by the Greeks and other republicans. The march of a great epidemic having roused the nation from its supineness, we see the appropriate leaders of a new movement in the conservators of the public health. It is with feelings of great pleasure that we regard this strenuous exertion on the part of the members of the medical profession. One of the noblest vindications of their claims has recently come before the public in the columns of the *Times*; we allude to the able and eloquent annual Report of Mr Simon, the medical officer of health for the city of London. Seldom, indeed, does it fall to our lot to peruse a production where such high literary and scientific merit in the treatment, is combined with so deep an interest in the subject-matter. The author of the Report now before us, and a few others who pursue the same class of research, are becoming to the politician what the German Professor Hecker has already proved himself to the historian. The latter savant, by his celebrated work on the epidemics of the middle ages, has thrown light on many problems of the social life of those periods, and even on portions of the more exclusive domain of mental philosophy. Let us hear what Mr Simon says of the vastness of the field which lies before them. 'It needs the grasp of political mastership, not uninformed by science, to convert to practical application these obvious elements of knowledge—the elements of sanitary legislation—to recognise a great national object irrelevant to the interests of party, to lift a universal requirement from the sphere of professional jealousies, and to found in immutable principles the sanitary legislation of a people.'

In our present brief notice of this elaborate Report, we can only glance at the various general conclusions

which the author has deduced as the result of his extended inquiries. And, first, as to the circumstances attending the origin and progress of cholera.

The pith of the matter lies in the following sentences:—'That which seems to have come to us from the East is not itself a poison, so much as it is a test and touchstone of poison. Whatever in its nature it may be, this at least we know of its operation. Past millions of scattered population it moves innocuous; through the unpolluted atmosphere of cleanly districts it migrates silently without a blow—that which it can kindle into poison lies not there. To the foul, damp breath of low-lying cities it comes like a spark to powder. Here is contained that which it can swiftly make destructive—soaked into soil, stagnant in water, griming the pavement, tainting the air—the slow rottenness of unremoved excrement, to which the first contact of this foreign ferment brings the occasion of changing into new and more deadly combinations.'

There is, it appears, a close analogy between the action on local atmospheres of this 'ferment,' changing them into the perfect cholera poison, and the action of the poison of any infectious disease on the human frame. Particular atmospheres may be said to take a kind of cholera disease; that is to say, by receiving and developing in their ready natures the cholera ferment, which is the migratory principle to which the spread of the disease is due, they become peculiar 'choleraic' atmospheres, and the powerful, indeed apparently the only media for producing the disease of cholera in the unfortunates who breathe them. When a person is seized with an infectious disease, it is because there is something in the state of his animal economy which fits it to receive the poison of infection. So when the atmosphere of a given spot receives and cherishes the subtle ferment of the cholera poison, it is because there are causes distinctly to be traced which render such atmosphere a ready hotbed for the reception of the ferment and the consequent elaboration of the complete poison. Briefly, these circumstances are, the coincidence of dampness and organic decomposition, promoted by a high temperature. It matters not where, it matters not how these conditions coexist; the result appears to be constant. Let the subtle ferment spreading from a neighbouring locality but reach the spot where they do coexist, and a choleraic atmosphere is the result—a frightful mortality is not far distant.

The cholera, according to Mr Simon, is eminently a district disease—that is, it lays hold on one locality in marked preference to another. A low level and a dense population are the concurrent circumstances which nearly always produce a fit field for the development of the poison, simply because they produce a damp atmosphere and an abundant organic decomposition. In the low levels of the metropolis, the water supplied to the inhabitants is inferior in quality, and largely loaded with organic matter. This impurity becomes a strong ally of the pestilence, by producing that unhealthy state of the individual system which is pre-eminently favourable to the reception of the completely generated poison.

Concerning the ferment which acts as the test and touchstone of the cholera poison, it is not distinctly known whether it may ever arise from local causes in our own country, or whether it must invariably migrate hither from the East, its apparent home; or what the first impulse to its origin may be. From what is known of the habits of the disease which follows in its track, we are driven to entertain an unpleasant suspicion, to say the least, that the fermented poison may become permanently localised, and that we may possibly in future have perpetual laboratories for its production close to our own doors. As yet, however, from our experience of the time and manner of its approach, it appears to migrate from east to west. In the words of Mr Simon: 'It filtered along the blending line of land

and water, the shore, the river-bank, and the marsh. Conducted by the Oder and the Vistula, from the swamps of Poland to the ports of the Baltic, it raged east and west from St Petersburg to Copenhagen with frightful severity, and, obedient to old precedents, has let us witness its arrival in Hamburg.' Twice previously, and again in this its third visitation, travelling from the last-mentioned town, it has reached the north-eastern seaports of our islands. It is forcibly and emphatically declared by Mr Simon, 'that the epidemic prevalence of the cholera does not arise in some new cloud of venom, floating above reach and control high over successive lands, and raining down upon them without difference its prepared distillation of death; but that so far as scientific analysis can decide, it depends on one occasional phase of an influence which is always about us, on one change of materials which in their other changes give rise to other ills; that these materials, so perilously prone to explode into one or other breath of epidemic pestilence, are the dense exhalations of animal uncleanness, which infect, in varying proportion, the entire area of our metropolis.' In short, it appears now to be a matter of comparative certainty, that if there be present no foul hotbed of corruption for the reception and development of the migrating ferment, the complete poison will not be generated.

We have not space to inquire into the particulars of the Report before us. Suffice it to say, that they abundantly illustrate and enforce the truth of the general statement above made. Wherever the malarious exhalations are intense, there the ferment strikes and works, whether it be in the low-lying levels of the river docks of London, putrid with the accumulations of sewerage and other decomposed organic matter left to rot in the sun at the ebb of every tide; or whether it be at a high level, as that of Merthyr-Tydvil, where filth and neglect, during the former visitation, produced an artificial poison-bed more deadly than any existing in the metropolis. Fit localities for the development of the cholera poison may be various in situation and size; for instance, the deadly circumstances may coexist either in a large district, as a whole city, or a low-lying tract of damp soil; or in an isolated locality of smaller size, like Merthyr-Tydvil; or in the still greater isolation of a single house. These distinctions are sometimes met with in the pure form of complete exemption in the surrounding neighbourhood, and a virulent manifestation of the disease in the particular spot, and are established beyond doubt by a crowd of instances in which the degree of development of the disease is seen to vary with the degree of intensity of the causes above indicated.

We may here notice a singular observation, which shews the influence of increased temperature on the development of morbid poisons, and the increase of mortality consequent thereon. In the healthier districts of the city, it is shewn by the tables that the cold season produced its usual effect in a higher rate of mortality, in accordance with the well-known unfavourable influence of inclemency of the weather on the aged and infirm. But in the unhealthy districts, the rate of mortality in the hot and cold months is exactly reversed, and summer becomes the fatal season. This is shewn by Mr Simon from the observation of other diseases which result from defective sanitary conditions; and it may be presumed that the result will be seen still more strongly marked during the probable prevalence of cholera in the ensuing summer.

The cause, then, of the disease being so clear, we have not far to seek for a preventive. We are all familiar with the old replies of Demosthenes when asked what was the chief part of an orator. We may imitate the questions and answers in the present instance. What is the chief remedy for this evil?—Cleanliness. What the next?—Cleanliness. What next



again?—Still cleanliness. Cleanliness of the city, of the house, of the person. When this first and last requisite shall be fully attained, then the deadly enemy will be stripped of all power to harm us; then the 'subtle venom' will be to us so subtle that its presence will never more be recognised. The presence of the test and touchstone of poison will be of little matter when the development of the poison is no longer possible. But, alas! here, as in many departments of the healing art, it is far easier to point out the effect which we desire to produce, than to find the due means to accomplish our end. The giant growth of London and its vicinity; the existence of 250,000 houses, covering an area of 100 square miles, mostly drained at a vast outlay on an old-established imperfect plan, or rather no plan, the alteration of which involves almost incalculable expense, even if physical causes do not concur to prevent the introduction of any better system—almost cause us to despair of effecting the desired improvement. 'The evil before all others,' says Mr Simon, 'to which I attach importance in reference to the present subject, is that habitual impoisonment of soil and air which is inseparable from our tidal drainage. From this influence, I doubt not, a large proportion of the metropolis has derived its liability to cholera. A moment's reflection is sufficient to shew the immense distribution of putrefactive dampness which belongs to this vicious system. There is implied in it that the entire incrementation of the metropolis—with the exception of such as not less poisonously lies pent beneath houses—shall, sooner or later, be mingled in the stream of the river, to be rolled backward and forward among the population; that at low-water, for many hours, this material shall be trickling over broad belts of spongy bank, which then dry their contaminated mud in the sunshine, exhaling fetor and poison; that at highwater, for many hours, it shall be retained or driven back within all low-level sewers and house-drains, soaking far and wide into the soil, or forming putrid sediments along miles of underground brickwork as on a deeper pavement. Sewers which, under better circumstances, should be benefactions and appliances for health in their several districts, are thus rendered inevitable sources of evil. During a large proportion of their time, they are occupied in retaining or redistributing that which it is their office to remove. They furnish chambers for an immense evaporation; at every breeze which strikes against their open mouths, at every tide which encroaches on their inward space, their gases are breathed into the upper air, wherever outlets exist—into houses, foot-paths, and carriage-way.'

We would willingly pass over the repulsive faithfulness of Mr Simon's description of these abominations of London sewers; verily, they are chambers of horror. A sanitary voyage through the main subterranean arches similar to the old recorded expedition of Agrippa through the Roman sewers, would be little less than the death-warrant of any rash individual who should undertake the project. We might almost fancy their murky atmosphere peopled with the spectre phantasms of fever and miasm, and expect at every turn to meet the subtle impoisonment of the cholera poison gliding on its deadly way, and seeking an escape from its prison below to its fated prey above.

Let not the dweller in a loftier region fancy his dwelling secure, though the air may be apparently sweet and pure. A false and selfish neglect will bring speedy retribution. Though far removed from the centre of the cloud of miasm, he and those near and dear to him may yet experience its deadly effects. Let him listen to the faithful words of Mr Simon; and if humanity do not inspire his efforts, at least let fear arouse him from his sluggish slumber: 'Not alone in Rotherhithe or Newington—not alone along the Effra or the Fleet, are traced the evils of this great miasm. The

deepest shadows of the cloud lie here, but its outskirts darken the distance. A fever hardly to be accounted for—an infantile sickness of undue malignity—a doctor's injunction for change of air—may at times suggest to the dweller in our healthiest suburbs, that while draining his refuse to the Thames, he receives for requital some partial workings of the gigantic poison-bred which he has contributed to maintain.'

It is sad to contemplate the waste of life consequent on this giant evil of imperfect drainage. In this age of money-making and enterprise, one of the many consequences of the exposure of the evil—namely, the desertion of localities otherwise desirable for residence, and the consequent loss to the proprietors of house-property—will furnish one of the strongest motives for reform. Any plan for the new drainage of London should certainly be carried out under the supervision of government; and it would be but a just application of the public revenues, to vote grants in aid of private enterprise. Of what importance is the ornament of the capital, in comparison with the removal of this poisoned air, which breeds a hundred plagues? What satisfaction can be found in the finished perfection of new architectural triumphs, when we well know that the filthy courts and lanes, crowded with deformity and disease, are ever pouring out their deadly exhalations in the close vicinity of the new edifices? In such circumstances, building for ornament is little less than a studied mockery of wretchedness; it is making of the capital of the world one vast whitened sepulchre. True, we are now only just trembling at the approach of a new, and therefore a more terrible enemy; but typhus and the other infectious diseases are really more deadly, because they are ever beside us. Let us take care, or the cholera will become their permanent ally.

Rome exulted in her aqueducts and baths: her meanest citizen could bathe luxuriously; but how many thousands of the unhappy Londoners can scarcely afford to wash their hands in comfort! We are not, even as regards abundance, in the unenviable position of the *Ancient Mariner*—

Water, water everywhere,  
And not a drop to drink!

though, indeed, as regards quality, the latter line is almost literally true of this great city. We are a long way behind the ancients in this matter of water-supply. The world has grown young again, and full of folly. We now drink water loaded with organic matters. In some springs, the peculiar flavour is derived from church-yard drainage. One of these is described by Mr Simon under the title of a celebrated city-pump—which celebrity we should think it will now long retain. Listen, O luxurious inhabitant in the Modern Babylon, to another argument for restricting your imbibitions to generous Port or sparkling Hock!

'The grateful coolness so much admired in the produce of that popular pump, chiefly depends on a proportion of nitre which has arisen in the chemical transformation of human remains, and which being dissolved in the water, gives it, I believe, some refrigerant taste and slightly diuretic action.' Listen, too, ye fair and temperate ones, whose delicate palates delight in the unalloyed taste of Souchong and Pekoe, or in the pure simplicity of the limpid element. There is death in the cup; you are fitting your bodies for the poisons of cholera and typhus; you are shortening your lives at every draught. The generations pass, and pass too quickly, for the hand of death is aided by the sluggish indifference of man. A new Exchange, a new Museum, new Houses of Parliament spring up among us, but an aqueduct is the dream of a vulgar mind, and the tale of filth and degradation must not be breathed in the scented atmosphere of refinement. But though misery may not speak with effect, death will not be dictated to, and by the hand of his new and subtle ally he

strikes down the highest, and avenges our neglect of the poor. We can scarcely read the facts lately published concerning the domestic miseries of the poor, in London and other great cities, even with proper feelings of humanity. Disgust conquers pity, and the brutalised condition of the unfortunate victims of poverty goes far to destroy our sympathy with them. A degradation less horrible would strike a tenderer chord. It is dreadful that this should be possible in an age of civilisation like the present—that a large population should be degraded, in all that relates to physical comfort, far below the level of the brutes that are fattened for our table. But truth compels us to admit that the fact is so. A new crusade against dirt and disease, in support of that cleanliness which is only next to godliness, is the one cure for the evil. Mr Simon is one of those who march in the van, and we heartily wish him God speed!

In conclusion, we cannot resist the melancholy pleasure of extracting the following noble sentences from his Report:—

'If the possible mischief to be wrought by epidemic cholera lay in some fixed inflexible fate, whatever opinion or knowledge I might hold on the subject of its return, silence would be better than speech, and I could gladly refrain from vexing the public ear by gloomy forebodings of an inevitable future.

'But from this supposition the case differs diametrically; and the people of England are not, like timid cattle, capable only, when blindfold, of confronting danger. It belongs to their race, it belongs to their dignity of manhood, to take deliberate cognizance of their foes, and not lightly to cede the victory. A people that has fought the greatest battles, not of arms alone, but of genius and skilful toil, is little likely to be scared at the necessity of meeting large danger by appropriate devices of science. A people that has inaugurated railways, that has spanned the Menai Strait, and reared the Crystal Palace, can hardly fear the enterprise of draining poison from its infected towns. A people that has freed its foreign slaves at twenty millions' ransom, will never let its house population perish, for cheapness' sake, in the ignominious ferment of their filth.'

Every one who can procure this Report should read it. It is a noble effort of genius and industry; and if, by the present notice, we can but extend the circle of its diffusion, we shall not regret the attempt to reduce its proportions, and to reproduce, in a shorter form, the general results to which it points our attention.

## WEARYFOOT COMMON.

### CHAPTER II.

#### LIFE IN SIMPLE LODGE.

HE would see about it to-morrow! Poor captain! he never saw about anything to-morrow; and how could he? since to-morrow never comes—it is always to-day, and to-day, and to-day. Thus he continued to sit, in his accustomed chair by the fireside, bending upon his sister ferocious brows that concealed—though not from her—a world of gentleness and love; and sometimes turning to throw a puzzled look at the small thin figure that had gradually got beyond the door, and at length flitted slowly through all parts of the room, as silent and unquestioned as a shadow. Elizabeth now and then bestowed a wan smile upon the little boy, and by and by even made a motion with her hand, which she intended to be playful. But she was hardly up to this sort of thing; it was a new language she was trying, and the boy only looked at her the more intently, with his soft, calm, searching eyes. She was more intelligible when, one evening that he was in the

room at tea-time, she thought of offering him a slice of bread spread with preserves. This was surprisingly clear; and Elizabeth was so proud of the advance she had made in the science of puerology, that she repeated the experiment every evening, and every evening with the same success.

It was difficult to get that boy to sit upon a chair. This was probably a mode of bestowing himself he had not been accustomed to, for he always contrived to slip gradually down, and land upon the carpet. There he would sit long and patiently enough, looking first at one, and then at the other interlocutor; striving, apparently, to comprehend the philosophical abstractions of Elizabeth, and trace the appositeness of the captain's stories. The appendages of the latter's face, however, were still a grand object of inquiry. As their acquaintance advanced, he made many attempts to satisfy his curiosity; and at length, one evening, he fairly got upon a footstool, and laying hold of the captain's whisker gently with one hand, and of his shaggy beard with the other, he looked earnestly into the eye they had concealed. The examination was probably satisfactory; for from that moment the patron and his protégé were on familiar terms.

The captain, as had been said by good authority of Mrs Margery, took to him wonderful. And this was not surprising; for although constitutionally fond of children, and, indeed, of everything weak, small, and unprotected, he seemed debarred by some unhappy fatality from exercising the sympathies of his nature. Among the juvenile classes of the common, he bore, in fact, the reputation of a sort of ogre; the trees surrounding his enclosure were observed to have a preternaturally gloomy look; and the silence that usually dwelt in the domain was of the character which betokens constraint, as if there was something kept hushed. There was a tradition afloat touching a little boy he had tried to tempt with an apple, and who would actually have fallen into the snare had he not fortunately looked up into the ogre's face, when of course he ran home, screaming the whole way. A particular child was even pointed out as the hero of this adventure; and although the identity was never absolutely established, he was looked upon for some time by the juvenility as a public character. This being the state of matters, it is not surprising that the captain took to our Boy wonderful; that he told him stories—still beginning, never ending—without number; and that when at last they walked out on the high road, or the common, hand in hand, the old soldier felt as if he was patronised.

As for the boy, who had lived all his life among real ogres, it was not likely that he should be terrified by a sham one. He had been accustomed to take things at their true value, to be imposed upon neither by looks nor words, neither by beards nor imprecations, but to watch narrowly what deeds came of them. As for the bad habits to which he had probably been bred, they dropped away from him from mere want of use. In a house where all were his providers, his occupation of foraging for himself was gone; and nothing remained of it but the self-possessed mind, the noiseless tread, and the observant eye. The qualities that would have fitted him for a successful tramp were thus quietly transferred, before the awakening of moral consciousness, to the service of civilisation; and the natural gifts that would otherwise have grown crooked, were permitted to attain a healthy development. From the captain he learned to fence; from Mrs Margery, to read; from Mr Poring, to meditate; and from Elizabeth he acquired insensibly the refinement of manner imposed upon masculine spirits by the presence of a gentlewoman.

But still the captain was puzzled. Every now and

then he would turn a wondering look upon the boy, as if he could not well make out how or why he was there; and on withdrawing his eyes, he would be heard to mutter: 'That's very extraordinary!' Even Elizabeth, who usually took things with great equanimity, appeared to have a misgiving; and her brother thought she probably indicated the propriety of consulting the rector, by remarking one day, 'that men who acted as spiritual guides to their flocks, might perhaps be considered competent to advise likewise in the far less difficult matters of worldly concernment;' but the veteran did not choose to acknowledge himself a sheep in any but the religious sense of the word. As for Mr Poringers hints touching the public refuge provided by the humanity of the legislature for deserted and destitute children, they were listened to with horror by both. The workhouse was inseparably associated in their minds with ideas of captivity, tyranny, and starvation; and the very mention of it made the captain attach himself to the little boy with all the chivalrous generosity of his character. And so matters went on at Semple Lodge, or, as it was pronounced by the villagers, who always cling to colloquial words, Simple Lodge—the castaway of the common anchoring himself more and more securely every day in the affections of its inhabitants, till at length the captain's puzzlement wore off, Elizabeth's misgivings gave in, and even the thoughtful Mr Poringers determined that to think more about it was no use.

It is surprising how long this went on—how completely the rags of the common were metamorphosed into the somewhat eccentric manufactures of Mrs Margery and Molly, and these into the orthodox fashionings of the village tailor, before the boy was called anything else than Boy. The question of a name received much discussion in the kitchen before it came before the upper-house, Mrs Margery being all for Alphonso, and Molly for another proper name of romance, which she thought fit to render Ludovig-oh! When at length, however, the difficulty began to be felt in the parlour, an adviser of quite a different calibre was taken into council, and Mr Poringers prosaic taste prevailed.

'I say, Poringers,' said the captain, 'since you found this boy, you might at least tell us what to call him.'

'Excuse me, sir,' replied Mr Poringers; 'I didn't find the boy. I wouldn't find a boy on no account. If I had found him, I know what would have happened to him!'

'Why, what, eh? You don't mean to say you would?'

'I would have done it, sir! Yes, miss, I would have done it! I know where he would have been to-day. Saug enough, miss. No fear of his coming out of there, like the Gravel-pits.'

'Wretch!' cried Elizabeth, dropping her work, 'you mean the house appointed for all!'

'Destitute and deserted brats. Yes, miss, I mean the workhouse—that's it.'

'Well, well,' said the captain, as Elizabeth cast down her excited eyes and resumed her work, 'we don't want to know what you would have done; only, the boy must have some name to answer to when the roll is called. Boy is not a name at all.'

'Then, sir, I would give him the very next thing to Boy that is a name—not another letter. If we do not keep the lower classes down to strict allowance, you will see what will come of it. I don't see, sir, that as a vagrant, and the son of a woman of the name of Sall, he has any call to more than Bob.'

'Bob! why that's the very thing! a prodigiously happy idea, for it's no change at all to speak of. Boy—Bob, Bob—Boy! capital!' and the captain would have chuckled outright if that had been his habit; as it was, he contented himself with grinning like a death's-head with the hair on, as he repeated: 'Bob—Boy, Boy—Bob!'

The next thing the boy wanted—for, in fact, now that his original rags were off, he had nothing of his own in the world—was a surname; and this seemed to the captain to be a matter of a little more delicacy. Generous as he was, the idea of giving his own, although it occurred to him for a moment, was dismissed as impracticable in a neighbourhood of idle chattering people. He thought of Mollison; but although he knew he could take that liberty with his deceased friend, he was afraid it would distress Elizabeth. Poringers, that was a name that rung well; but he feared the proprietor, although so liberal in the matter of Bob, which belonged to nobody in particular, would object to sharing his own name with a vagrant. The misgiving proved to be correct.

'Mine is a family name,' said Mr Poringers; 'a family name, sir. Service is no inheritance; and my grandfather was a glass and chinaware man in Manchester.'

'What, glass and china? Earthenware too?'

'No, sir: only to complete the stock. Glass and china was the goods he dealt in.'

'Well, that's very extraordinary! I remember—good family, eh? Ah! not unlikely. Elizabeth, I once heard a story read about the "Noble Poringers," and it's all concerning glass and china and earthenware. You see, a certain old gentleman, a grandfather I shouldn't wonder, took himself off to foreign parts for seven twelvemonths and a day, leaving his young wife behind him, on her pledge that she would not take a new husband within that time. Well, home he comes just half an hour before the latest day is out, and finds that his wife is to be married again as soon as the clock strikes. So you see, poor soul, he is no younger, and his skin has grown brown with the sun, and his clothes seedy with travel, so that not one of them knew him from Adam. Well now, you must know they are all drinking together, and just to give his wife—who keeps her oath so strictly—a hint of who he is, as the ballad says—

It was the noble Poringers that dropped amid the wine

A bridal ring of burning gold, so costly and so fine;

and he sends the—no, it was not a glass, but a—no, not a china-bowl, but a—no, not an earthenware mug: it was, in fact, a golden beaker; but— What now? I didn't say it was your grandfather!'

'It may have been, sir,' said Mr Poringers resignedly: 'all I can undertake to say is, that I never heard a word of the story. My grandfather may have had a ballad made about him, just like any other respectable individual. The lower classes will be impudent; it is their nature, sir, and we can't break 'em of it now.'

'Then, Poringers, send Molly,' said the captain; 'I daresay she cares nothing about her name: I only hope she knows what it is.' Molly soon entered the room in her usual astonishment, and hung helplessly to the handle.

'Well, Molly,' and her master modulating his voice winningly, so that it almost got to the creak of a civilised door, 'you have a name, haven't you, Molly?'

'O yes, sir! O please, sir—two, sir!'

'It is only one we want just now. You see Bob, poor fellow, has none at all, and he must be Bob Something, you know, Molly. You wouldn't mind letting him take yours, would you?'

'O yes, sir! O lawks, sir! mine, sir? Oh, is he to be Molly, and I nothing, O please, sir?' and consternation opened still wider her astonished eyes.

'Nonsense! nonsense!' growled the captain; 'it is the other name you must give him: and we don't want you to give it—you may share it with him.'

'O please, sir, it's such a little name it won't share! Oh, it's only Jinks, sir; and what ever am I to be, if I am not Molly Jinks?'

'Jinks be hanged!' ejaculated the captain with



contempt. 'Who would take a gift of such a miserable little imp of a name as Jinks? Keep it to yourself, every letter of it: Bob shan't be Jinks. And now, get away with you, and send the cook.' The captain strode up and down the room, indignant with himself at having asked, and been refused, a name that nobody in his senses would accept, unless accompanied by an estate of considerable magnitude. His meditations were interrupted by the reappearance of the culprit.

'It is the cook I want!' he growled furiously.

'O yes, sir!' said Molly, 'O please, sir, Mrs Margery is up to the elbows in the soup, and both her best caps in the washing-tub!'

'That is *very* extraordinary!' said the captain. 'How long has that woman been in my service?—do you know?'

'O yes, sir! sure, sir! O please, sir, she came fourteen months before me!'

'And when did you come?'

'O please, sir, just after father and mother died of the typhus,' and Molly put the corner of her apron to her eyes, and jingled the door handle nervously.

'And when was that, poor Molly?' said the captain softly.

'O please, sir, I don't know, sir! It can't be long, sir,' added Molly, smothering a small sob, 'for I remember it like yesterday.'

'Elizabeth!' and the veteran turned solemnly to his sister: 'here is an individual, whose name is said to be Margery, and who, it is pretended, has been in my service for years—I don't know how many, but for years, mind you—and I never set eyes on her in my life! How can I believe in that woman? I don't believe in her! I might as well believe in a ghost, merely because other people say they have heard and seen a ghost!'

'O please, sir,' interposed Molly, who could not hear her friend spoken lightly of, 'Mrs Margery is nothing like a ghost! She is round, sir, and good-humoured, and can't a-bear Mr Poringer, and teaches the Boy to read, and makes him comfortable and say his prayers, and is willing for him to take her name, which he will give credit and renown to, like John Gilpin, and return honourable in the denowment, when he is the Heir-at-law.'

'What is Margery's name?' demanded the captain anxiously.

'O please, sir, it is Oaklands.'

'And a very sensible name, upon my honour! Oaklands! A capital name—worth forty Jinkses. Get away with you now, poor Molly—the thing is settled.'

It was in this wise the waif of the common received the name of Robert Oaklands, destined to become known to the reader of the English tongue wherever these ubiquitous pages travel.

It is no wonder that the captain had never seen Mrs Margery, for the kitchen was to him a region of mystery, which he would hardly have entered even if the rest of the house had been on fire; while Mrs Margery was never known to stray from its precincts further than the little room adjoining, where she slept. She never went out of doors, even to go to church, having always some article of dress deranged, or wanting, which served in case of need for an excuse, although her usual plea was 'that she had not cleaned herself.' Yet notwithstanding this lack of air and healthful exercise, Mrs Margery, in defiance of the laws of hygiene, grew fat and fair; and it was supposed that Mr Poringer was very anxious to know where she invested her money, and that some of his most deeply meditative moments were spent in calculating the probable amount of her savings.

When Molly returned from her mission to the parlour, she announced the result to her patroness in these words: 'Oh, it is all settled! The Boy is Oaklands now,' and then sat down dejectedly on a chair.

'Did I not tell you so?' cried Mrs Margery, her comely face beaming with delight. 'Now mind me, that is the first point, and see if I don't come right as well in all the rest. Keep watching for it, girl, if it should be for ten years; it's your own interest; for as sure as you are sitting there, you will never be married till it happens!'

'Oh, and am I never to be married for ten years?' said Molly in discontent.

'Not till the denowment—depend upon that. Keep watching, I tell you, wherever you are, and in whatever service you may be. Never lose sight of young Oaklands for your life!'

'Oh, then I must watch here,' said Molly, 'for I will never leave the captain!'

'The captain! Why, I thought he frightened you out of your seven senses! What ever has come over you, Molly, for you look as woe-begone as the Lady Araminta herself?'

'Oh, it was before he knew about my coming here he frightened me—before he knew that father and mother were dead of the typhus. And then he spoke so kind, and called me' (some hysterical sobs) 'poor Molly. And I *am* poor Molly! I haven't nobody in the world but you, Mrs Margery, and you ain't nothing to me; and I will never leave the captain—not for six pound a year, and tea and sugar—never! Not till I'm married!' added Molly more composedly, as she wiped away her tears with her bare arms.

After receiving his name, Bob, as in duty bound, grew rapidly, both lengthways and breadthways; and for the son of a woman of the name of Sall, was really a very fine-looking boy. Mrs Margery thought he had quite an aristocratic air; and it may be so. He was well fed, clothed, and lodged; he was the pet of everybody in the house but Mr Poringer; he was strong and healthy; and having been pretty well his own master ever since he ought by rights to have been a baby, it is no wonder that he had the light, springy, yet sedate step, the easy carriage, the self-possessed manner, and the independent look vulgarly supposed to be the peculiar attributes of good birth. Being naturally of quick faculties, he very soon surpassed his mistress at reading. While he was still learning, he listened to the evening lectures, and sometimes was the reader himself; but all this was quickly over. He devoured the slender volume on his way home with it from the library, remaining on the common till it was finished; and no entreaties or reproaches could prevail upon him to endure it a second time. The captain's books, which related chiefly to the military art, he next attacked, and got through them like a moth; then Elizabeth's, which were almost all on philosophical subjects—these proved tougher reading, but he finished them; and then a number of older volumes—the usual heir-looms in all middle-class families in this country—which, mixed with the mass, gave a higher character to the whole. Then he copied with a pencil everything of the pictorial kind in them all; made a bust of Molly in pipe-clay, which was considered in the kitchen a master-piece of art; and executed a wooden caricature of Mr Poringer. The boy, in short, by insensible degrees, laid a capital basis for education; but, exhibiting general talents and capabilities rather than a passion for any particular study, it was evident that he was not one of those heaven-born geniuses who are destined to achieve greatness by their own unassisted efforts.

Bob had no companions of his own age. In the earlier period of his abode at the Lodge, he had made an effort to get into juvenile society; but he was unsuccessful. He joined a group of boys who were playing at the edge of the wood just behind the garden; but it was evident that he was looked upon as an intruder. Some of the small boys shrank from him as a kind of familiar of the ogre, while the larger ones desired him to go and look for his mother upon the

common. He did not at the time feel this as an insult, for he was not ashamed of the common, or of anything else; so he merely replied, that he did not want his mother, nor she him.

'And we don't want you!' cried a great lubberly boy, somewhat his senior; 'we will have no vagrants here; so troop, or it will be the worse for you!' Bob merely looked at him, and when the boy advanced to enforce his commands, he did not stir, but continued to look him in the eyes.

'Don't you know,' said the other imperiously, 'that I am master here—that what I say is to be done? If you don't go, I'll throw you over the wall!' and he stepped up to take hold of him. But Bob waited, still looking, till the Philistine was just upon him; and then, seeing that there was no mistake about it, he caught suddenly up from the ground a piece of stick, gave a smart blow with it to the outstretched fingers of his antagonist, and, taking advantage of the pain and astonishment he had caused, glided into the garden of the Lodge, and locked the door. That afternoon, Bob went to the common as he had been ordered. It was the first time he had visited the place without an errand—the first time he had looked in it for anything more than the path to and from the village. Now, he seemed as if he had come in quest of something. Was it his mother? Perhaps. But Bob did not know.

Time wore on, and at length an incident occurred which awoke the still life of Simple Lodge. It was the arrival of a young girl, bequeathed for a certain number of years to the captain by his sister-in-law, the widow of his only brother long deceased. The brothers had rarely met since boyhood; and although Elizabeth had resided for some time in the house of the one engaged in commerce, she had not taken kindly to the wife, and after the husband's death was very glad of the captain's invitation to change her quarters. The widow was now dead in her turn, as they were informed by a lawyer's letter; and although she had maintained but little intercourse with her husband's relatives, she had not scrupled to confer upon them her only child during the years of her monage. Sara's fortune was two thousand pounds, which was to be allowed to accumulate for her benefit till she was twenty-one; it being supposed by the testatrix that during the intervening years she would be amply provided for by her uncle and guardian, Captain Semple. This was an arrangement which the captain and Elizabeth thought only natural; but it cannot be denied that they both felt a little uncomfortable at the idea of a stranger, even though only a little girl, breaking into the midst of their quiet ménage. The captain had never seen his ward, and Elizabeth recollected her only as an infant, whom her mother had watched over like a dragon, to protect her from the consequences of the old maid's unskillful attentions—for Elizabeth had begun early in life to be an old maid. Upon the whole, the announcement was not a pleasant one, and Simple Lodge was a good deal put out of the way by it. Had the girl been left wholly destitute, it would have been another thing; but as it was, notwithstanding the eleemosynary nature of the duties required of him, she appeared somehow to the captain in the character of an heiress, with whom it was necessary to be upon his Ps and Qs.

This, however, was a good deal mended by the manner of her advent. She had been brought, without notice, by one of her mother's relations, who dismounted with her from the stage-coach at the village, in the midst of an all day's—we may say an all week's—rain. Her luggage was sent round by the road on a cart, and the travellers came across the common with an umbrella between them. With a proper geographical knowledge, they might have managed better than they did; but as it was, they were wading every now and then in a shallow pool, to which the heavy and monotonous plash of the rain communicated a cha-

acter of tenfold discomfort; and when at last they entered the house, cold and wet, the slight girlish figure, arrayed in the deepest mourning, and the desolate and lonely look she cast round the strange place, melted the good captain's heart, and he pressed his brother's child in his arms with uncontrollable agitation. Elizabeth was more composed, but not less kind. She kissed the wet little girl at arm's length, and remarked that this subnival world was made up of comings and goings, that life was a journey of which death was only the end, and that a pale orphan, with wet feet and destitute of luggage, represented man in the abstract coming naked and helpless into a vale of tears.

'That's very true, Elizabeth,' said the captain; 'that's very true. So go and change Sara's dress before she takes cold; and Bob, fly to the kitchen, and tell the cook to get her something warm and nice to eat; and Molly—poor Molly!—do you bring it up, for you are the fittest to wait upon the orphan.' Whereupon Elizabeth led off the young girl by the arm, Bob disappeared like a shadow, and Molly, after bidding good-by to the door handle with a nervous shake, set to to wipe the table frantically with her dirty apron. The relation, being a man of business, and having executed his commission, had already taken his leave; shaking the orphan absently by the hand, and the moment he left the house, taking out his pocket-ledger, to enter as he went along the last item of the expenses of the journey.

#### FEMALE BEAUTY IN OLD ENGLAND AND NEW ENGLAND.

It is generally allowed that there is more of what is called chiseled beauty in America than in Europe—that the features of the women are finer, and the head more classical. But here ends the triumph of our sisters of the West: their busts are far inferior to those we admire at home, and a certain attenuation in the whole figure gives the idea of fragility and decay.

And this idea is correct. What they want is soundness of constitution; and in consequence of the want, their finely cut faces, taken generally, are pale instead of fair, and sallow when they should be rosy. In this country, a woman is in the prime of her attractions at thirty-five, and she frequently remains almost stationary till fifty, or else declines gradually and gracefully, like a beautiful day melting into a lovely evening. In America, twenty-five is the farewell line of beauty in woman, beyond which comes decay; at thirty-five, she looks weary and worn, her flat chest symbolising the collapsed heart within; and at forty, you see in her thin and haggard features all the marks of premature age.

It is customary to regard this as the effect of climate; but some think it folly to go to an ultimate cause, when the whole system of artificial life in America offers direct defiance, as they assert, to the known hygienic laws. This view is supported with great intrepidity by a woman's journal in Providence, called the *Una*—not a Lady's Magazine, fair reader, but a regular broad-sheet, written by and for women, whose leading articles are on women's rights, and whose advertisements are from women-doctors, women-professors, women-lecturers, women everything. *Una* admits the fleeting character of her countrywomen's charms, and contrasts more especially Old England with New England, yielding frankly the *pas* in beauty to the former. She hints, we must own, at some very problematical causes of the early loss of female charms in America—such as, 'the bounding of life's horizon by the petty cares that wait on meat, drink, and raiment; the absence of genial and improving intercourse, and of earnest interest in the hopes and fortunes of the race; and the little rivalries and little aspirations on which, for lack of better objects, so many a soul is



fain to waste its energies.' All this is very well for the philosophic Una, who pays her taxes under protest, since she had no voice in laying them on; but the implied notion, that our pretty countrywomen have no petty cares connected with their food, no little rivalries and little aspirations, but plenty of earnest interest in the destinies of the race—is very complimentary. After flourishing a little, however, about these grievances, which, we fear, are not *scholly* unknown to our English beauties, she proceeds to the main point. 'What,' she asks, 'is the diet of New England generally? Hot biscuits, fat pork, and tea! these are the staples. They are varied with preserves, made pound for pound, and endless varieties of cake, and the inevitable pie. Pastry, which most children in England are not allowed to touch until they get their long frocks or tailed coats on, is here the everyday food of young and old. Salt pork is cheap—that is, greasy fulsomeness makes it fall sooner on the appetite than any other meat, and so it forms the *pièce de résistance* at almost all tables, except those who live within hail of a butcher, and whose owners are well to do in the world. Tea is the grand panacea for all fatigue, low spirits, dampness, coldness, pains in the head and in the back, and, in short, for nearly all the ills that flesh is heir to; the quantity taken by middle-aged and elderly women almost surpasses belief. Certainly, to put the average at six or eight cups a day would be setting it low enough.'

What mere human beauty could stand these horrors? Fancy Miss Angelina, dressed for her first ball, and sitting down, before she goes forth conquering and to conquer, to keep up the stamina with just a little snack of fat pork, gooseberry-jam, and pumpkin-pie! Is it any wonder that this young lady should wither at twenty-five? Yet fat pork has its advocates. Cobbett was delighted with the fondness of the Americans for 'extreme unction,' and on his return to this country, did everything in his power to force the greasy dish upon the English palate, affirming that a dislike to fat pork was a decided symptom of *insanity*. We may allude, likewise, to the important part played by hogs' lard in the composition of cosmetics. The thousand and one kinds of paste and pomatum for the skin and hair are all of this substance, only differing a little in the colour and perfume; and in nineteen cases out of twenty, hogs' lard is bears' grease. Why should a substance improve beauty when absorbed by the skin, and destroy it when taken into the stomach? This is a question we leave to be settled between Una and the chemists.

Another cause of the unhappy condition of female beauty in America is stated by the outspoken Una to be—the dirtiness of the fair sex. This is dreadful. Not one woman in ten, she asserts, permits cold water to touch her whole person every day, and not one in five performs the same ablution once a week; 'while, if the truth could at once be flashed forth from its hiding-place, it would shew still longer intervals, from the bare thought of which imagination shrinks.' We do not know what is the case in this respect as regards the majority of our own countrywomen; and, to say the truth, we are afraid to ask.

The wrath of Una falls next upon the sleeping accommodation. 'Three-quarters of New England,' she tells us, 'sleep in slightly enlarged coffins; and, in our opinion, a capital plan it is, for if the fourth quarters were stowed with the rest, the people might as well be in their graves at once. These coffins are called bedrooms, for no other reason than that they are large enough to hold a bed, a light-stand, and a wash-stand; and 'they are often rendered redolent of sweetness by thickets of coats, pantaloons, dresses, and petticoats hung on the walls.' This is so faithful a sketch of the bedrooms of the middle-class Londoners, that one might fancy Una to be speaking, by mistake, on the wrong side of the question,

till we hear that the dens described are 'purified by the perfumes of the adjoining kitchen, and the dead, dry heat of its red-hot stove. Here "pa, ma, and the baby," with now and then a brace of small fry in a "trundle-bed," seethe and swelter through the winter nights, and fit themselves admirably for facing the nor-wester in the morning. Here, when one of the family is sick, he is pretty sure to die; because a fever almost inevitably takes the typhoid form from the fetid atmosphere around, and the struggling currents of health are sent stagnating back to the burdened heart and lungs.'

Up to this point, Una makes out no case specially against her countrywomen; and if the argument ended here, we should have to bring in Nature guilty of what is laid to the charge of the American women. But now, at the very fag-end of the discourse, comes the whole gist of the matter, and we see why it is that Englishwomen are superior in freshness of looks, and in their duration of beauty, not only to their transatlantic sisters, but to the women of most of the countries of Europe. 'All day long in winter,' says Una, 'the stove-heat burns into the brain, and withers the cheeks, and palsies the muscles, and enfeebles the step; and though summer comes with its outer air and its fruits and flowers, the loads it is asked to remove are too much for it, and the years circle round, the weary, aimless, soul-consuming years, and the bad diet, and the uncleanly habits, and the foul air, and the hot stove have done their miserable work. Beauty is gone, health is vanished, hope has set, and the young mother, who should be just beginning to shed beauty and goodness and light around her, has shrunk mournfully into the forlorn and wrinkled and unlovely old woman. When will our countrywomen awake and ponder the things that concern their peace?'

The stove, in fact, including the foot-stove, or *chaufferette*, is the great enemy to beauty throughout the world. Wherever this is used, there is no such thing seen in the women as middle age; all are either young and pretty—if nature has bestowed charms—or old and ugly. The blooming middle age of the Englishwomen is the grand distinctive feature of our island; and it is owing neither to the absence of fat pork in their diet, nor to the presence, in their feelings, of earnest interest in the destinies of mankind, but simply to their inhaling a pretty considerable quantity of fresh air, both in summer and winter. Not that they imbibe enough: far from it. Their sleeping arrangements and their ablutions are both very imperfect, we know; but it may be a question, whether their negligence in these respects, though hurtful to themselves, is not advantageous to us of the ruder sex. Things are bad enough with us as they are; but if Englishwomen 'awoke and pondered the things that concerned their peace'—what would become of the peace of the men?

#### FRENCH EXPERIMENTS IN ENTOMOLOGY.

At intervals during the last three years, Parisian savans have been occupied in various curious researches of equal importance to the entomologist and the physician. Every one knows how extensively leeches are used in medicine, and how efficacious their application frequently is. But leeches are every day becoming rarer and more expensive, especially in France,\* where the efforts made to naturalise them have hitherto been neutralised by various obstacles, and among others, by a destructive agency long unknown to science, which has at length been discovered and revealed to the world by a learned Frenchman—M. Soubeiran.

In April 1850, M. Soubeiran began his experiments. He caused a large basin of a peculiar construction to be placed in the central surgery of the hospitals,

\* For the Natural History of the Leech, see Journal, vol. iv., second series, p. 234.

in which basin he deposited a number of leeches, with the intention of watching their habits and ascertaining the best mode of treating them. The basin was circular, and lined with lead; a stream of water could be turned through it at will by means of a *jet d'eau*, from the head of a watering-pot; and there was an opening for the escape of the surplus water, covered with clear muslin, to prevent the leeches from getting out. At the bottom of the basin was a thick bed of potter's earth, in which were placed a number of aquatic plants, such as the *Iris pseudo-acorus*, the *Typha angustifolia* or reedmace, the *Callitha palustris* or marsh-marigold, &c.; and above all, some of the *Chara*. In one part of the basin was an island level with the water, composed of a bed of clay covered with a layer of light soil and turf, in order that the leeches might bury themselves at pleasure in the light earth. Three hundred fine Hungarian leeches were placed in the basin thus prepared, where they were left undisturbed until the end of September. During this time they were fed three times—twice with blood and once with frogs.

But the animals did not multiply, as was expected. When the harvest came to be looked for, only about 100 young ones were found. These were mostly hidden within the folds of the leaves of the plants, and attached to each of them was a small, pale, tetradactylous animal with a flat elongated body. It had four folded antennae, two of them longer than the others, and a bifurked tail composed of a single segment. Beneath this tail were appendages that continually agitated the water, to renew it at the surface of the respiratory organs; the feet were furnished with a hook. The animal did not swim, but walked at the bottom of the basin, or along the stems of the plants beneath the water. It was found in great numbers upon the sieves used in fishing up the leeches, and upon the stems of the iris and typha; but the greater number lay within the interior folds of the leaves with the young leeches.

M. Soubeiran placed a few of these insects in a jug filled with water, and threw in among them some young leeches. The animals speedily seized upon the leeches, which could not shake them off, but, in spite of all their efforts, were speedily overpowered. Wishing to satisfy himself whether they would attack full-grown leeches in the same way, the experimentalist put several of them, together with two adult leeches, into another jug likewise filled with water. At the end of a few minutes, they had fixed themselves upon the poor animals, which struggled violently, and endeavoured to escape from their enemies, but could not make them quit their hold. This scourge of young leeches is very common in the Seine, and in some of the stagnant pools in the environs of Paris. Naturalists call it the Soft-water Asellus.

From these observations, M. Soubeiran concluded that the great numbers of the *Aselli* frequenting the waters of the Seine and the stagnant pools above referred to, render the propagation of leeches impossible, unless this water could be kept from the basins where these useful animals are reared; and even in that case, this method of rearing them is costly, and not easily practicable.

Another insect to which the Parisian naturalists have lately been directing special attention, is the *Acarus* of the itch. The repugnance and disgust excited from remotest antiquity by this disease are well known. There is a reference to it in the 13th chapter of Leviticus. It is mentioned by Hippocrates, by Aristotle, by Galen, by Horace, by Cicero, by Juvenal, by Rabelais, and by a hundred others. Some of these, and especially Rabelais, give unmistakable indications of being acquainted with the singular insect that causes the disease. But it was reserved for a Corsican student, M. Renucci, to demonstrate the existence of the *acarus* in such a manner that no one could dispute its authenticity; since that time people have troubled themselves

very little about it. The experiments of a learned French physician have at length rendered the observations on this insect conclusive and complete.

These observations at first presented great difficulties. Dr Bourguignon could readily study the *acarus* with the aid of an ordinary microscope. He could define its form; he could even delineate its anatomy and reproduction; but how was he to arrive at a knowledge of its habits?

To arrive at this knowledge, the doctor had recourse to a peculiar species of movable microscope, invented by himself, which enabled him to observe the *acarus* on the diseased person. This microscope is very simple: it is composed of the frame of an ordinary microscope, the optical and essential part of which has been raised from the socket that supported it, and articulated to a movable knee at the extremity of a lever; the instrument can thus be transported to the part under inspection.

Another difficulty, however, presented itself in the fact, that the ordinary light is obscurity for opaque bodies seen through the microscope. Dr Bourguignon was forced, therefore, to have recourse to artificial light, the luminous rays of which he concentrates into a brilliant focus by the aid of a round magnifying-glass, which focus he directs upon the chosen point of observation.

We will not here speak of the fantastic form of the *acarus*—of its forepaws, which, armed with a kind of sucker, enable it to fasten itself in the furrow which it digs under the skin; of the movable points which it carries on its back, to fix itself more firmly in these furrows; of its terrible mandibles, and all the other weapons with which nature has armed it, to accomplish its destructive mission. We shall merely notice one or two curious details concerning its habits.

The *acarus* is a kind of microscopic tortoise. In the moment of danger or sleep, it draws in its head and feet. If pushed out of its burrow, it turns its head from right to left, to find out where it has been placed; and speedily regaining its form, it squats in it instinctively, for it has no eyes. Its march is precisely that of the tortoise. Notwithstanding all his optical resources, Dr Bourguignon has not yet been able to discover a single male *acarus*. All those observed by him were females fecundated, doubtless for many generations, as is the case with several other insects—the gnat, for example. The *acarus* usually lays sixteen eggs, which are carefully deposited in a furrow under the epidermis, where they are ranged in pairs. They are hatched in about ten days.

Thanks to the observations of Dr Bourguignon, the disease caused by this insect, so terrible to our ancestors, can now easily be cured in two days.\*

#### FLORENCE MAY—A LOVE STORY.

THE golden light of evening dazzled the eyes of a young girl who stood upon a stile, watching for the arrival of the London coach.

It was about a hundred miles from London—no matter in what direction—at the bottom of a green valley, down the western slope of which the road came winding here and there concealed by trees. A well-beaten path led to a village a few fields distant, embowered in orchards, and leaning, as it were, against the massive oaks and elms of a park, that shut in the view in that direction. The square steeple-tower of the old church scarcely overtopped this background of leaves.

Florence May was waiting for her mother, who had been absent some weeks in London, and who had been compelled to leave her all alone in their humble

\* This article is chiefly taken from the *Archives de Pharmacie*, a French medical journal.

cottage—all alone, unless her rectitude and her sense of duty may be counted as companions.

They were poor, humble people. Mrs May was the widow of a country curate, who had died, leaving, as curates sometimes do not, a slight provision for his family. It was like a Providence. Having fought the fight of life nearly out on L.50 or L.60 a year, some distant relation, whom they had never seen and scarcely ever heard of, put the curate in his will for L.1000. This sum, invested, was sufficient to support both mother and daughter in that out of the way place.

A letter had arrived, when Mrs May had been a widow for three years, requesting her to come up to London, to hear of 'something to her advantage.' This was vague enough; but she resolved to comply; and not being able to afford the expense of a double journey, had left her daughter, then about seventeen, under the guardianship of the neighbours, her own character, and a mother's prayers.

She has been absent more than a week. What has happened in the meantime? Why does Florence wait with more than the impatience of filial affection—with a countenance in which smiling lips and tearful eyes tell of a struggle between joy and sadness? She is troubled with the burden of her first secret—a secret which she nurses with uneasy delight, and which she is anxious to pour into the ears of her only confidante—her mother. How many maidens of seventeen are still in this dream of innocence!

The sun had set before the roll of wheels came sounding down the valley; and when the coach began to descend, nothing could be distinguished but the lights that glanced occasionally behind the trees. The time seemed prodigiously long to Florence. She even once thought that some fantastical, ghostly coachman was driving a phantom vehicle to and fro on the hillside to mock her. Young people in her state of mind would annihilate time and space. However, here it comes, the *Tally-ho*, sweeping round the last corner—lights glancing—horses tossing their heads and steaming—a pyramid of luggage swaying to and fro. 'That's a gal's voice as screamed,' said a man to the Whip as they passed. 'Full, inside and out!' was the reply, and on went the *Tally-ho* along the level lap of the valley.

'She is not come,' murmured Florence, after waiting in vain some time, to see if the coach would stop lower down; but it pursued its inexorable course, and the young girl returned by the dim path to her cottage on the outskirts of the village.

That was a critical period in her life. For some days after her mother's departure, she had spent her time either at her needle, or with one or two old neighbours, who wearied her with their gossip. To escape from the sense of monotony, she had wandered one morning into the fields, as it was indeed her custom from time to time to do; and there, with the scent of wild-flowers and new-mown hay around, she allowed her mind to be ruffled by those thoughts and feelings which at that age breathe upon us from I know not what region—sparkling and innocent stirrings, that scarcely typify the billowy agitation of succeeding years.

Across the meadows that occupy the lowest portion of that valley, meanders a stream, over which the willows hang their whip-like branches and slender leaves. Near its margin, Florence used often to sit with her work; first diligently attended to, then dropped occasionally on her lap, that she might watch the little fish that flitted like shadows to and fro in the shallow current; then utterly forgotten, as she herself went wafting down the stream of the future, that widened as she went, and flowed, at her unconscious will, through scenes more magical than those of fairyland. The schoolmen have sought for the place of Paradise—did they peep into a young heart that is waiting, without knowing it, to love?

It was during her first walk since her mother's

absence, that a stranger came slowly down the opposite bank of the stream; and seeing this lovely young girl entranced in a reverie, paused to gaze at her. His glance at first was cold and critical, like that of a man who has trodden many lands, and has seen more such visions than one under trees in lonely places—visions that, when neared and grasped at, hardened into reality, vulgar and bucolic. In a little time, however, the brow of this stranger unbent, and his lip uncurred; and there came a strange fear to his heart, that what he saw of grace and beauty beneath that archway of willow-boughs, was a mere optical illusion—a phantasm painted on the exhalations of the meadow by the sun's beams. There is a certain pride in disappointed natures, which makes them believe that all the loveliness of the outer world is of their own imagining, as if we could imagine more perfect things than God has imagined and thrown on this canvas of the universe.

The man was of the south by travel, if not by birth, and muttered some 'Santa Vergines!' more in surprise than devotion. He did not move or speak to attract the young girl's attention, but waited until her eyes, which he saw were restless, should chance to fall upon him. Her start of alarm, when she found herself to be not alone, was repressed by the grave politeness of his bow.

'Young lady,' he said, in a low musical voice when he had leaped the stream and stood by her side, 'I am on my way to Melvyn Park. Perhaps I may learn from you in what direction to turn.'

'The roof of the mansion shews above the trees,' replied she, rising and stretching out her pretty hand.

'I might have guessed so,' said the stranger, whose accent was but slightly foreign; 'and this is but a bad excuse for speaking to you. It is more frank to say, that I was surprised at seeing so much beauty and grace buried in this sequestered valley, and could not pass on without learning who you may be.'

Flattery flies to the heart as swiftly as electricity along the wire. The maiden blushed, and drew off but slightly. 'Florence May,' said she, 'is known to the whole valley, and will not be made sport of nor molested without finding defenders.'

Was this affected fear a cunning device for telling her name without seeming to answer an unauthorised question?

'Child,' replied the stranger, who perhaps took this view of the matter, for he smiled, though kindly, 'you may count on me as one of the defenders. For the present, let me thank you, and say farewell.'

With these words, and a somewhat formal bow, he turned and went across the fields, leaving Florence bewildered, almost breathless, with surprise and excitement, and, to confess the truth, not a little piqued that her ruse, if ruse it was, had brought the dialogue to so abrupt a termination. She had no wish to parley with strangers. Her mother had expressly warned her not to do so. What a famous opportunity thrown away to exhibit the rigidity of her sense of duty! Indeed, there had been so little merit on her part, that the stranger, if he had rightly read her countenance, might pretend that the forbearance had been all on his side. Of course, she would have gained the victory in the end; but how much more dramatic if her prudence had been put to a severer test!

These were not exactly her thoughts, but the translation of them. She followed the retiring figure of the stranger, as he kept by the path along the willows; and slightly bit her lip. Then suddenly, as if remembering that the singleness of mind which her attitude expressed was more beautiful than becoming—what an odious euphonism is that word for heartless acting—she turned with something like a flout, and sat down again, with her face averted from the now distant stranger—averted only a moment; for soon her attitude would have reminded a sculptor of that exquisite group



in which the girl turns to bill the dove that has fluttered down on her shoulder.

Now, take it not as an article of faith that Florence had 'fallen in love,' as the saying is, with that tall handsome stranger with the black eyes and sun-painted complexion. We would have you more careful in the construction of your credo than that. But, at anyrate, an impression had been produced: this was to be expected. When a man falls into the water, he may not be drowned, but is sure to be wet. Florence had never seen any members of that category of 'lovable persons,' which is of so little political and so much social importance, except two or three six-foot farmers, and the Rev. Mr Simmer, their pale-faced, sandy-whiskered young bachelor vicar of fifty. Should we be astonished, then, that after her first agitation had subsided, there remained something more than memory of the compliment which had fallen from the lips and been ratified by the eyes of that distinguished-looking stranger?

Need it be said, moreover, that whilst she remained by the margin of the stream, and during her sauntering walk home, and all the evening, she thought of little else save this very simple meeting. As to her dreams, we shall not inquire into them; but the moonbeams tell us that they shone all night between the ivy-leaves upon a smile as sweet and self-satisfied as ever lived on the lips of a maiden on her wedding-even.

Next day, it was rumoured in the village that a foreign painter had come to occupy one of the wings of Melvyn House, by permission of the family, which had remained many years abroad. His name was simply Angelo; and a mighty fine gentleman he was. One could not guess, to look at him, that he had ever lived on frogs; or was 'obligated to hexpress hisself in a barbarious lingo,' as the landlady of the Jolly Boys' Inn phrased it.

Florence was proud to say casually, to some old spectacled lady—who observed 'indeed she never,' and told her neighbour that 'Miss May seemed very forward'—that she had held a minute's conversation with this said painter. We take this as a proof that she was only dazzled by him; and that she had not really experienced one pang of love. So much the better. We must not bestow the only treasures of our hearts on the first interesting person we may happen to meet under a willow-hedge.

And yet there she is at her place again, thinking of yesterday's meeting; and—by the bow of Eros!—there is he, too, wandering accidentally in the same direction with his sketch-book under his arm. We had no business to be eaves-dropping; but 'a concealed fault is half pardoned.' We were invisible, and heard every word they said. It should all be set down here, but it was dreadful nonsense, at least what he said; for she, partly in coquetry perhaps, and partly in pride and prudence, entrenched herself behind the rampart of her maiden modesty, and answered only—by listening.

The young man was in a state of temporary insanity; at least, if one might believe his words. Like all lovers, he professed to have skill in physiognomy. He asked no information about Florence, did not care who she was or where she came from: all he wanted to know was, whether she was free. He spoke eloquently and with sufficient respect. The young girl more than once felt her heart melt; and it was a great exertion for her at length to reply, that her mother was away, and that she could not listen to another word without her knowledge and sanction.

She did listen, however, for he went on talking interminably. According to his account, he was an artist who had studied many years at Rome; but he did not say whether he was of English origin or not, and, of course, Florence could not ask the question. This would have been to avow a stronger interest in him than consisted with her views. We should have liked her

better, perhaps, had she been more frank and artless. Yet, after all, her conduct was not at this time an image of her character, but arose from a struggle between her own simplicity and her recollection of her mother's warnings.

It is needless to say that, after many hesitations, she now invariably went every day to her accustomed seat. This might be interpreted into giving a rendezvous; but she had a prescriptive right to the place, and why should she be driven from it by an intrusive, impertinent stranger? Impertinent! Nay, not so; nothing could be more reserved and respectful than his demeanour; and if he was really in earnest, and if he turned out to be a respectable man, why—perhaps it would be a matter of duty in her not to repulse his advances. Matrimony was indeed, they had told her, an awful responsibility; but if, by undergoing it, she could raise her mother to a more comfortable position, would it not be her duty to make the sacrifice?

Matters went on in this way for several days, and Florence began to wait impatiently for the arrival of her mother, to whom she might relate all that had passed. Angelo accustomed, perhaps, to more easy conquests, was irritated by her cold caution, not knowing that hers was the hypocrisy of duty. He once even went so far as to say, that he blamed himself for wasting time with a calculating village coquette, and, rising, departed with a formal salute. Florence's bosom heaved with emotion, tears started to her eyes, her lips trembled, and she was on the point of perilling all her prospects by calling him back. But by a prodigious effort of will, she restrained herself, and kept her eyes firmly fixed on the ground until the sound of his steps had died away.

'No,' said she rising, 'I am not to be so lightly won. These days have given me experience. He is certainly captivating in manners, but sometimes I think that one moment of weakness on my part'—And she thought of the fate of Lucy Lightfoot, who had been left to wear the willow, after saying 'Yes' too soon.

In the afternoon, a letter came announcing her mother's arrival for that very day; and it was in the excitement that followed this little misunderstanding that she waited for the arrival of the coach. She wanted an adviser sadly. Should she, after what had passed, return next day to the meadow, or should she remain at home in melancholy loneliness? The question was more important than even she imagined; for we will not undertake to say, despite Mr Angelo's lofty sentiments, that his faith was as strong as he professed. Might he not have wished to test the virtue of this beautiful girl, whom he had found, as it were, by the wayside? Men of the world are not averse to these trials; and if their unfortunate victim fall, they go away on the voyage of life, leaving her to repent in tears, and hugging themselves with the idea that they have not been 'taken in.' They forget that the most fervent Christian does not venture to ask for strength to resist temptation, but only to be kept from it; and that every one of us perhaps would be caught, if the Evil Angler knew what bait to put on his hook.

Florence had just placed her hand on the latch of the door, when she saw a figure come out from a deep mass of shadow close by, and softly approach her. It was Angelo. She screamed slightly, but so slightly that even he scarcely heard. 'Do not be alarmed, Miss May,' he said; 'I came here in hopes to meet you as you entered. I could not have slept to-night without asking your forgiveness for the rude manner in which I left you, and for my unauthorised accusations. Do say that you are no longer angry.'

'Of course—of course; I have no right to be angry. But, for Heaven's sake, sir, retire: I must not be seen by the neighbours talking to a stranger at this hour.'

'There is no one in the street, and I will not detain you a minute. Cannot you find in your heart to give

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me one word of hope, one look of encouragement? I am bewildered, maddened by your cold indifference.'

'You have no right, Mr Angelo, to call me cold or indifferent; I have blamed myself for my too great simplicity. My mother will be back to-morrow; I will tell her what has happened; and—and— But I must go in.'

'This gives me hope,' cried he; 'I ask no more. Florence—dear Florence!'

He took her hand, and kissed it over and over again, although she almost struggled to get it away. The strong passion of that man seemed to pass through her like an electric shock; and wonderful emotions came trooping to her heart. Suddenly, however, she broke away, and, as if fearing her own weakness, glided into the house without a word, and locked, and bolted, and barred the door in a manner so desperately energetic, that even Angelo, who stood foolishly on the outside, could not help smiling.

'She will come to the meadow to-morrow,' said he, rather contemptuously, as if surprised and annoyed at his own success that evening.

But Florence did not come. With the intuitive perception with which modesty supplies woman, she felt that the stranger had pushed his experiments on her character too far. The following day was spent at home in indignant self-examination. What had she done to provoke that freedom, and authorise what seemed something like insult? Conscious of innocence, she proudly answered: 'Nothing.' But, ah! Florence, were not those tacit rendezvous a fault?

Mrs May arrived in the evening with a whole budget of news and complaints. Small was the mercy by her vouchsafed to the modern Babylon: a den of thieves was nothing to it. The 'something to her advantage' was a proposal to invest her money in a concern that would return fifty per cent. She had expressed herself 'much obliged' to her correspondent; adding, however, that 'some people would consider him a swindler, indeed she supposed he was. Perhaps he would object to pay the expense he had put her to. Of course. Dishonest persons were never inclined to pay. She wished him good-morning, and hoped he would repent before he arrived at Botany Bay.' Having detailed these and many other brave things which she recollected to have said, good Mrs May began to pay attention to her tea, and allowed Florence to relate all that she had said, done, thought, and felt during the time of her mother's absence.

'Bless me!' exclaimed Mrs May at length, setting down her tea-cup, 'I do not wonder the house looks rather untidy. You have been doing nothing else but making love ever since my back was turned. There's proper conduct for a clergyman's daughter!'

Florence expressed her regret as well as she could, and in trying to excuse herself, was compelled to dilate considerably on the fine qualities of Mr Angelo. Let it be admitted that she suppressed all allusion to the last interview.

'Well, child,' quoth Mrs May, after listening to what by degrees warmed into a glowing panegyric—'I think this is all nonsense; but you know I have always promised never to interfere with any sincere attachment you may form. Are you quite sure this gentleman is not merely making a pastime of you?'

Florence turned away her head, and her mother went on. 'I shall make some inquiries into his position and prospects, and character of course. If all turn out to be satisfactory—we shall see; but I confess to having a prejudice against foreigners.'

It was no easy matter for Mrs May to gain the information she required. The whole village, it is true, was up in arms about the young stranger who had arrived at Melvyn Park, and who, as every one knew, had long ago been betrothed to Miss Florence; but nobody could say one word on the subject that was not surmise.

Poor Mrs May was highly indignant when she learned that all those visits to the meadows had been watched and commented on by every gossip, that is to say, every woman in the place, and returned home to scold her daughter, and pronounce the mystery unfathomable.

'You must,' said she, 'forget this person, who evidently has no serious intentions.'

'I will try,' replied her daughter with an arch look; 'but there he is coming down the street towards our house.'

The stranger had heard of Mrs May's return, and was hastening to beg permission to renew the interviews, the interruption of which had taught him how deeply he was moved. The elder lady received him with formal politeness, as a distinguished foreigner, while Florence endeavoured to keep her eyes to the ground. Mr Angelo found it necessary to break the ice by declaring, that he was no Italian, but an Englishman by origin though not by birth.

'My name,' he said, 'is Angelo Melvyn, and I am now the owner of Melvyn Park. Sorrowful circumstances, you will perhaps have heard by tradition, induced my father to go abroad many years ago. When I became the head of the family, I naturally felt a desire to behold the mansion of my ancestors, which was not invested to me personally with melancholy associations. It was my fancy to explore the neighbourhood without making myself known. I met your daughter; and—may I hope that she has related to you all I have ventured to say of my feelings towards her?'

This explanation 'made all things straight,' as Mrs May afterwards said. Angelo might have told a good deal more; for example, that his heart was only just recovering from the pain of a bitter disappointment, when the lovely form of Florence appeared to console and indemnify him. But few words in these matters are wisdom; and there is always time to be confidential. Within a month from that period, every one had heard that Mr Angelo Melvyn was about to be married to Miss Florence May, with whom those who had learned their geography, and were not conversant with the facts, insisted he had fallen in love in Tuscany. 'In those southern climes,' said Miss Wiggins to Miss Higgins, 'it is the custom for cities to stand godfathers to children.' The wedding took place in due season; and it is to be supposed that it turned out a happy one, for the last news we have heard of Mr and Mrs Melvyn was, that they have been seen walking along the meadows near the willow-stream, whilst two bright-eyed children—one named Angelo, and the other Florence—were running to and fro, gathering daisies and butter-cups, to make wreaths and nosegays withal.

## CORKS.

THE published announcement in the newspapers of a new Cork-cutting Company, gives us one among many reminders of the remarkable fact, that one kind of wood, and one only, should be available for the simple purpose of stopping bottles. We call it wood, though it would more correctly be designated bark: since bark, which it really is, is wanting in many of the characteristics of true wood. No other bark hitherto known possesses in so remarkable a degree the softness and elasticity of cork; or, if there be such, it is too small in quantity to be commercially available. Cork is such a peculiarly inert substance, such a neutral, such an innocent, such a nothing, that it will injure few if any of the liquids with which it may come in contact: the liquids may ruin the cork, but the cork will not retaliate. And then its obedient mechanical qualities are striking enough. We have all heard of a man jumping into a quart-bottle, and when we have seen it done, we will believe it; but in the meantime, we can more readily believe that a quart-bottle cork can be driven into a

pint-bottle; and this is a far more valuable feat of the two. It is, of course, this power of compression which gives to a piece of cork its chief value as a bottle-stopper. When a cork is in its right place in an unopened bottle of wine, the lower part swells out in the wider part of the bottle-neck, and renders extraction all the more difficult.

Before speaking of this modern attempt, only one among many, to cut corks by machinery, we may say a little concerning the origin and nature of the peculiar substance which is the material operated on.

Cork is nothing more or less than the bark of an evergreen oak, growing principally in Spain and other countries bordering the Mediterranean; in English gardens it is only a curiosity. When the cork-tree is about fifteen years old, the bark has attained a thickness and quality suitable for manufacturing purposes; and after stripping, a further growth of eight years produces a second crop; and so on at intervals of eight years, to the extent of even ten or twelve crops. The bark is stripped from the tree in pieces two or three inches in thickness, of considerable length, and of such width as to retain the curved form of the trunk whence it has been stripped. The bark peeler or cutter makes a slit in the bark with a knife, perpendicularly from the top of the trunk to the bottom; he makes another incision parallel to, and at some distance from the former; and two shorter horizontal cuts at the top and bottom. For stripping off the piece thus isolated, he uses a kind of knife with two handles and a curved blade. Sometimes, after the cuts have been made, he leaves the tree to throw off the bark by the spontaneous action of the vegetation within the trunk. The detached pieces are soaked in water, and are placed over a fire when nearly dry: they are, in fact, scorched a little on both sides, and acquire a somewhat more compact texture by this scorching. In order to get rid of the curvature, and to bring them flat, they are pressed down with weights while yet hot.

According to a description given by an anonymous traveller in Portugal a few years ago, a cork-forest must be a very interesting object. The cork-tree is, in that country, the king of the forest; and the forests of these noble trees are now mostly comprised within the parks of the king and nobility. The largest is situated near Moira, in Alentejo. 'When I beheld it,' says this writer, 'the beauty of the scene was heightened by the temporary occupation by the troops of Don Pedro. The bivouac is always a scene of bustle and animation: the lively costume of the soldiers, the glitter of their arms, the artillery drawn up, the cavalry dismounted, the soldiers formed into groups of various magnitude—are at any time objects of interest; but when surrounded by the noblest works of nature, the effect is irresistibly imposing. Such was the scene in the cork-forest of Moira. Every tree became, as it were, a house for a dozen or more soldiers, the broad branches and thick foliage affording ample protection as well from the heat of the sun by day as from the heavy dews by night. Some were busied in preparations for the frugal meal; others were reposing after the fatigues of the march; others, again, forming beds with the branches or underwood; and all happy that they could avail themselves of a protection and cover as beautiful as it was grateful.'

This singular substance comes to England in rather large quantities, and is employed for a considerable variety of purposes—some on account of its lightness, some for its dryness, some for its softness, some for its compressibility.

The lightness or buoyancy of cork has led to its application in numerous contrivances for life-boats, buoys, and so forth. The specific gravity being so much less than that of wood, it assists in giving a buoyancy or levity to heavier substances which are required to be floated. Pliny describes the Roman

fishermen as using floats of cork to lighten their nets. The Romans were shrewd enough, also, to observe the usefulness of cork in facilitating swimming; for we are told that the Roman whom Camillus sent to the Capitol when besieged by the Gauls, put on a light dress, and took cork with him under it; when he arrived at the river Tiber, he bound his clothes upon his head, placed cork under his arms, and swam across. In modern times, as in ancient, this cork-aid to fishermen and to swimmers has been abundantly well known. In the first life-boat, constructed by Mr Greathead sixty years ago, cork was placed around the upper edge, to increase the buoyancy of the vessel; and cork has ever since been a favourite material among the inventors of the numerous life-boats. Cork, we may be certain, put forth no few claims to attention in the boats which competed for the Duke of Northumberland's life-boat prize in 1851. And the life-belts, life-cloaks, life-capes, life-hats, life-jackets, have exhibited abundant ingenious modes of applying cork.

The stopping or stoppling of bottles still remains chiefly within the domain of this curious substance; notwithstanding that, now and then, new claimants to the office spring up. The distillers of one of the varieties of British brandy have introduced a patent capsule, for securing the aforesaid liquid in an undeniable manner. It is not a substitute for a cork, but a mode of guarding the cork itself. It consists of a thin plate of metal, formed of a layer of tin united to a layer of lead; and this plate is brought to a shape which enables it to cover entirely the corked mouth of the bottle. But Mr Brockedon has invented a stopple in which cork is not employed at all: there are several cotton fibres twisted into strands and lapped with flax thread; there are many of these strands laid together longitudinally, with loose fine cotton-roving laid between them; these prepared strands are then lapped in a cylindrical form with flax thread, and the imitative cork thus made, is finally dipped into a solution of gutta percha. These stopples were, we believe, invented for a particular purpose, and are not intended as a substitute for corks generally. A later invention is the gutta-percha stopple, made wholly of this very useful substance. We have one now before us, and a neat little affair it is. The colour is dark, and the surface is glossy; the side is smoothly conical, the top is stamped with a slight device, and the bottom is stamped with the inscription 'Hancock's Patent, West Ham, Essex'; it is evidently hollow, and this hollowness enables it to assume a cork-like pliability: it appears to be, in fact, a little conical cup, on which a top or cover is firmly cemented. Other kinds of substitutes for corks have from time to time been brought forward, but none have yet progressed far towards the supplanting of the *Quercus suber* bark—the real cork.

Cork has something very salubrious about it, due to its singularly negative character; it absorbs very little moisture, and very little miasmata, and it is such ungrateful food for insects to live upon, that they pretty generally abandon it, and thus leave it clean and wholesome. Hence some persons have thought that cork-cuttings and shavings would constitute a suitable material for stuffing beds and cushions; and two or three patents have been granted for modes of attaining this end. One of the patentees, who uses the cork in a state almost as fine as saw-dust, states, that if a substratum of this finely comminuted cork be covered with a layer of horsehair or wool, we shall have all the smoothness of a horsehair or wool mattress, combined with the elasticity and lightness of cork. Such a mattress, if used as a cabin-bed on shipboard, might be valuable as a floating life-preserver. Messrs Esdaile and Margrave, at the extensive saw-mills in the City Road, have adopted many modes of employing cork-shavings or scraps. One of these purposes is as a packing for the stuffing-boxes of steam-engines: under



ordinary circumstances, it is necessary to employ oil to lubricate the place of contact between a piston-rod and the collar or box through which it moves; but it is found that a mass of cork fragments, against which the rod must press in its up and down movement, has a singular effect in cleaning the surface and enabling the rod to glide smoothly.

All the world knows that hats are now made with a lightness far surpassing the lightness of other days. There are zephyr hats, and gossamer hats, and ventilating hats, and satin and velvet, and extra-fine and superfine hats; each of which claims to be lighter than any or all of the others. Sometimes the lightness is sought to be effected by making the body or foundation of clip, sometimes of stiffened cambric; but there really does seem a reason why cork should possess superior qualities to other substances for this purpose; and, consequently, a patent has been obtained for a method of cutting cork into thin veneers, and fashioning it into a hat-body. The firm mentioned in the last paragraph possesses machinery of a very delicate kind for cutting wood into thin veneers; and analogous machinery, with a provision for slicing rather than sawing, has been by them made available for cutting cork into surprisingly thin sheets, applicable not only for hat-bodies, but also as a substance to be printed on. At the great industrial display two or three years ago, they exhibited remarkable specimens of their skill in this art—comprising finished hats made of cork; cork bodies or foundations, for use in making hats; cork-hat bodies strengthened by muslin; cork-veneers from 1-50th to 1-20th of an inch in thickness; cork-hat brim-plates, cork-hat cylinders, cork-hat tips, in the state in which they are supplied to the cork-hat body-makers; and, lastly, there were specimens of printing on cork-veneers, with type and engraved blocks.

We may here incidentally remark, that the same wonderful assemblage which displayed these examples of cork-veneers, illustrated also the peculiar fitness of cork as a material in which to execute models. There were, by M. Cruse of Stettin, cork models of the church of Kobern on the Moselle; the Nun-hill and fortress at Salzburg; the gate at Basle; the Château de Meillau in Berri; the Château de Josselin in Bretagne; the castle of Rheinstein on the Rhine; Castle Langenan on the Lahn; ruins of the church of the Septs Douleurs at Jerusalem; ruins of the gate at Damascus; the castle of Babertsberg, near Potsdam; and the castle of Rheineck. All these models presented much picturesqueness of effect, cork being well fitted by its porous texture to imitate the decayed masonry of ruined structures. There was also, by M. Cassebohm of Oldenburg, an elaborate cork model of Heidelberg Castle, on a scale of 1-135th of the original. Nor were our home modellers mistrustful of the facility which cork afforded to their labours. Mr Bury modelled a group to represent the story of Mazeppa—all in cork. The East India ship, with hull, and sails, and rigging, all made of cork, we can only regard as a failure; the material was not suited to the purpose in view.

There are, in truth, many modes of applying and employing cork besides those hitherto noticed. In Spain and Portugal, the peasants make bee-hives and water-buckets of cork; and some of the labourers employ it in making plates, goblets, tubs, and other culinary vessels. In some places it is used as a roof-covering, in lieu of slates, or tiles, or thatch; and it is also useful for lining stone-walls in particular places, thereby rendering apartments dry and warm. Every one knows that cork inner-soles for shoes are valuable in keeping the feet warm in winter. We believe that the thick soles of Chinese shoes are made of cork. Beckmann tells us that, 'among the Romans, cork was made into soles, which were put into their shoes, in order to secure the feet from water, especially in

winter; and as high heels were not then introduced, the ladies who wished to appear taller than they had been formed by nature, put plenty of cork under them.' Cork legs are too well known to be expatiated on. Cork is used as a convenient substance whereon entomologists may pin down their insects. Much of the cuttings left by cork-cutters is sold to colour-makers, who burn and prepare them into what is called Spanish black.

All these minor applications of cork, however, amount to a trifle when compared with the manufacture of corks *par excellence*. The ancients kept their wine in casks and jars which were stopped with pitch, clay, gypsum, potter's earth, and other substances; and the wine was drawn from these vessels into open cups or pitchers, which were brought to table; but when, in the fourteenth century, it became customary to keep wine in small bottles, then did also become prevalent the method of securing these bottles with small bits of cork-bark, which bits very soon acquired the name of corks. Cork appears to the eye very porous; but the pores do not open one into another, and it allows neither beer nor any ordinary liquid to percolate through it. It is only one-fourth the specific gravity of water: it is very compressible and elastic; and it is easily cut—hence cork possesses remarkable qualities for bottle-stoppers.

The cutting of corks requires a peculiar action of the implement employed. The cork-cutter first flattens and smoothes the large pieces, then cuts them into narrow strips, and then severs these strips into square or oblong pieces, each large enough for one cork or bung. The cork pieces are, in the clumsy language of the workshop, designated 'short,' 'short-long,' and 'full-long,' according to the size. The cutting of the pieces into actual corks is a curious process. The knife employed has a blade about six inches long by three in width, very thin and very sharp; and this is repeatedly sharpened during the process of working. How the cork-cutter manages to give such a neat cylindrical or slightly conical form to the cork, by cutting without any means of guiding the hand, is pretty to look at, but not easy to describe.

Now this art, like many others, has excited the attention of inventors, who seek to devise some mode of cutting corks by machinery. In one American patented method, the squared pieces of cork are held between two revolving spindles which grip them, and as they revolve, the cork is cut cylindrically by a revolving cutter-wheel; there is apparatus for placing and displacing the pieces of cork at the proper moments, and there is an ingenious mode of sharpening the cutter-wheel, by applying its two faces to two rotating disks covered with leather and emery. One among many English patents for cork-cutting machinery depends on a different mode of cutting; here the cutter is a cylinder with a very sharp edge, and this cylinder being pressed up against the surface of a piece of cork, and rapidly rotated, cuts out a cork in the way that a punch drives out a small circular piece from a sheet of metal.

Whether the simple cutting of corks will ever pay for the parade of a joint-stock company, with all its array of secretaries and treasurers, and so forth, is for those to decide who may choose to invest their capital; but there is, at any rate, such a company now claiming attention. It is not precisely a joint-stock company on the ordinary English plan, but a *société en commandite*, based on a system which has more than once been noticed in this Journal; and it goes under the name of the responsible manager as the firm of 'A. Crenet & Co.' The offices are in Paris; but there is, or has been, an agency for the sale of shares in England. We notice the project only so far as it bears relation to the ordinary trade of cork-cutting. The managers say that a machine, of which they own the patent, will cut

corks more rapidly, and more highly finished, and at lower prices, than they can be cut by hand. They say that England and France import about equal quantities of cork—between three and four million kilogrammes annually; and that, in addition, France pays more than four million francs annually for corks obtained ready made from other countries. The managers own to the ambition of being able to make and sell corks so cheaply as to obviate the necessity of any purchase from their neighbours. They state that each machine will make 100 gross, or 14,400 corks, in a day—about as many as fourteen expert cork-cutters ordinarily produce; and that it can be attended and worked by a mere boy. Patent licences are to be granted in Algeria, where cork-forests are now carefully attended to.

Thus does even so simple a little product as a mere cork become the basis for joint-stock operations.

#### CONDITION OF THE WORKMAN.

Let each man cease to recognise any insurmountable distinction between his employer and himself, and he may be assured that he will soon cease to think of the rights of labour in the interest of his increasing capital, and will leave the exhortations of orators, to feel a deeper excitement in ambition and a warmer zeal in hope. A few only, indeed, might achieve greatness, but all would feel the benefit of attempting it. As it is, want of ambition is a great obstacle to the elevation of the working-class. An acquaintance with physical comfort, and a determination to have it, insure some degree of exertion, but it is only that of routine; the qualities necessary for great successes, enterprise, and self-denial are comparatively unknown. The idea which the workman attaches to the term 'labour' is a proof how confined are the notions entertained by his class. He expects great rewards for the performance of mere manual toil requiring little thought and no invention. The higher qualities of the master's exertions, the enterprise, the originality, the imagination, go for nothing. This, perhaps, may be expected from the great division of labour, which, if it produces vast effects, often deteriorates its instruments. The man has been all his life a part of a great machine, a sort of human spoke or winch; and he cannot be expected to have much conception of the laws which regulate the rewards of exertion, or to know that the difference between success and poverty is the difference between originality and routine. The comforts of life are to be attained only by the exercise of qualities which all have not. The true reward is given to each man under the present system, and to quarrel with it is to question and defy laws which are unchangeable. The workman knows of himself that there are various kinds of labour, of value widely different, although the absolute toil may be the same. Employments may be agreeable, or the contrary; they may be permanent, or liable to interruption; they may be difficult or expensive, requiring a long apprenticeship and a considerable outlay; they may involve responsibility; success in some may be uncertain, health in others may be endangered; some may require activity and quickness, others taste and judgment. In all these, the relative value is determined by the variety of the faculties required, and by the wants of society; and it should be the great endeavour of the workman to acquire that kind of labour which is most in demand—a course of proceeding similar to that of the manufacturer, who anticipates the wants and studies the tastes of his customers, and does not continue the production of what was fashionable twenty years back, and then declaim against society for declining to purchase what it does not want. It is the chief use of education to the workman, to teach him what kind of labour it will be best for him to have to offer, and where he may dispose of it to advantage. Ignorant populations are always on the brink of misery; for not only is their unskilled labour almost worthless, but they are ignorant of where it is in request, and have not knowledge or self-dependence enough to shift their abode, and offer it where the price would be remunerative. Let the operatives apply the laws which regulate the difference of their own wages to the case of their masters, and they

will generally find that the remuneration which he receives is not more than skill, enterprise, and the risk of invested capital will justify.—*Times*, December 10, 1853.

#### CUVIER AND SATAN.

It was said, no doubt correctly, that so extraordinary was the skill of Cuvier, that if he only saw the tooth of an animal, he could give not only the class and order of the animal in question, but the history of its habits. The following anecdote of a quick and cool examination of a personage whom most people would not think of submitting to such a scientific research, is, to use the Yankee vernacular, decidedly 'rich':—In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for this month, an article, called 'Traits of the Trappists,' and bearing the signature of 'John Doran,' concludes with a characteristic anecdote of Cuvier. He once saw in his sleep the popular representation of Satan advancing towards him, and threatening to eat him. 'Eat me!' exclaimed the philosopher, as he examined the fiend with the eye of a naturalist, and then added: 'Horns? hoofs? graminivorous! Needn't be afraid of him!'—*American Paper*.

#### A FAREWELL.

FOR A SWEDISH AIR.

Look in my face, dear,  
Openly and free:  
Hold out your hand, dear,  
Have no fear of me!  
Thus as friends old loves should part,  
Each one with a quiet heart—  
O my Mary—my lost Mary,  
Say farewell—and go!

Never to meet more,  
While day follows day:  
Never to kiss more,  
Till our lips are clay.  
Angry hearts grieve loud awhile;  
Broken hearts are dumb—or smile.  
O my Mary—my lost Mary,  
Say farewell—and go!

#### LITERARY PENSIONS.

The application of the small fund at the disposal of the Queen is a promising peculiarity of the present time. More frequently than otherwise, the recipients are now authors, or their surviving families; and the public is acquainted by the mere name of the individual with the merit that has obtained this mark of royal kindness and distinction. Formerly, the case was very different. No influence, no entreaty could extort from government a pension for the widow of our great national poet Burns; but now this homage is readily paid to the genius of the Ettrick Shepherd, in a pension to his widow of L.50 a year. The widow of Dr Moir, the elegant and amiable Delta, receives L.100; the widow of Sir Harris Nicolas is likewise pensioned; and so are the sister and daughters of our late esteemed fellow-citizen, James Simpson. The pension to Alaric Watts is more timely than these, for he has still, to all appearance, a long course of life before him, and is working as vigorously as ever at literature. The sum is not large—only L.100 a year—but it will help a man of genius in undeserved difficulties, and it is a standing testimonial to his merit, proceeding from the highest quarter. It is not long since we stated our opinion of his productions generally, in reviewing his *Lyrics of the Heart*; and it is pleasing to us to find that Her Majesty and Lord Aberdeen have formed a similar appreciation of the poet.

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